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SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR JONES' COURTESY CALL WITH KUWAITI
MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS

REF: KUWAIT 655

Summary

¶1. (U) AMB Jones met on June 12 with newly appointed Kuwaiti Minister of Public Works and Minister of State for Municipality Affairs H.E. Dr. Fadhil Safar Ali Safar. Minister Safar aims to prioritize the development of Public Works personnel and information systems to enhance the work and capability of the Ministry. AMB Jones encouraged the combination of Kuwait's finances with American expertise to address current public works challenges in Kuwait. End Summary.

Minister's Priorities - Getting People to Work

¶2. (U) In response to AMB Jones' query on his biggest challenge, the Minister replied "getting people to come to work and commit to their job." He described a system with little accountability for both failure to attend work and submitting poor work products. To address this, he will be hosting weekly meetings and keeping records for attendance at work. According to the Minister, this will be the first time that such checks have been placed on Ministry employees. In addition, he wants to fully automate the Ministry despite the resistance to using computers by many. Minister Safar intends to move towards a paperless system and develop a more professional work environment that coordinates issues between the Ministry and the various municipalities. The Minister, who holds a Ph.D. in petroleum engineering, intends to utilize a U.S. training program called "Bulls Eye" he was exposed to while at the Kuwait Oil Company.

Potential for U.S. Assistance

¶3. (U) AMB Jones suggested that the GOK combine its financial resources with American expertise to address current public works challenges in Kuwait. Minister Safar said he welcomed additional experts from the U.S. side. AMB Jones noted that we now had two engineers detailed to the Ministry and offered to look into additional resources.

Proposed Infrastructure Projects

¶4. (U) Minister Safar discussed his coordination with the Ministry of Communications to divide responsibility on the development of transportation infrastructure. The Ministry of Communications will oversee light rail and metro and the Ministry of Public Works will oversee roads and bridges. Current projects with the Ministry of Public Works include the construction of two bridges in Sabiyah and Babiyan, development of the Eight Ring Road, and plans for a regional bypass road from the north to south of Kuwait. He expressed an interest to direct some public infrastructure projects to the private sector to increase efficiency and

output. AMB Jones reiterated the comments made during Transportation Secretary Peters' May 28 visit that the bypass road should be properly zoned to avoid the construction of urban centers along the highway (Ref A).

Kuwait Needs a Public Relations Campaign to Make Kuwaitis Take Better Care of Their Country

¶15. (U) Minister Safar suggested that Kuwait needs a public relations campaign to encourage people to take better care of their country. He stressed a need to address these issues through better education and also to have Kuwaiti political levels raise this at the highest levels.

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JONES